

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 12914

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: PPP REORGANIZATION

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 12567, (B) KARACHI 5316 (NOTAL),
(C) LAHORE 1430 (NOTAL)

1. FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY/CONSULATES GENERAL ASSESSMENT
OF PPP REORGANIZATION, ANNOUNCED ON PROVINCE BY PROVINCE
BASIS FOLLOWING LONG AWAITED STATEMENT ON DECEMBER 7 THAT
IT HAD FINALLY BEEN COMPLETED.

2. MOST NOTEWORTHY FEATURE OF REORGANIZATION IS THE
CONSCIOUS EFFORT IT OBVIOUSLY REPRESENTS TO SATISFY OLD
PPP ELEMENTS WHILE ACCOMMODATING NEWER ARRIVALS IN THE
PARTY. OLD PPP STALWARTS CONTINUE TO DOMINATE AMONG THE
LARGELY UNCHANGED RANKS OF PROVINCIAL PARTY OFFICEHOLDERS,
BUT NEWCOMERS HAVE BEEN WELCOMED IN GOOD NUMBER ON THE
PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES AND ON LOWER PARTY BODIES.
THE PROBLEM OF ACCOMMODATION HAS BEEN EASED BY A SUBSTANTIAL
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INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PARTY OFFICES, THE EXPANSION OF
EXISTING COMMITTEES, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PARTY
LAYER AT THE DIVISIONAL LEVEL. IN THE PUNJAB, THE SCOPE
FOR ACCOMMODATION HAS BEEN FURTHER WIDENED BY THE DIVISION
OF LAHORE DISTRICT, INCLUDING THE CITY, INTO FIVE ZONES,
EACH WITH ITS OWN OFFICE BEARER AND COMMITTEE SETUP, WITH
A COORDINATION COMMITTEE SUPERIMPOSED ON THE WHOLE.

3. THE POSITIONS OF MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURES AT THE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL LEVEL HAVE BEEN LARGELY UNAFFECTED BY THE CHANGES. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS (KARACHI NOTES THE EXCLUSION OF SIND MINISTER JAM SADIQ ALI FROM PARTY OFFICE) THEY RETAIN THEIR ASSIGNMENTS, EITHER AS OFFICE HOLDERS OR, AS LEGISLATORS, EX-OFFICIO COMMITTEE MEMBERS. IN SIND, HOWEVER, STILL MORE SUPPORTERS OF FEDERAL MINISTER MUMTAZ ALI BHUTTO HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED FROM LEADERSHIP POSITIONS WHILE BACKERS OF HIS RIVAL, PROVINCIAL CHIEF MINISTER JATOI, APPEAR TO HAVE ACQUIRED GREATER INFLUENCE. (KARACHI COMMENTS THAT IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICES IN SIND, MORE ATTENTION MAY HAVE BEEN PAID TO THE LONGSTANDING MUMTAZ-JATOI ADVERSARY RELATIONSHIP THAN TO THE ONE BETWEEN NEW AND OLD PARTY WORKERS.) IN THE SUKKUR DISTRICT OF THE PROVINCE, MEMBERS OF THE CLAN OF FEDERAL MINISTER PIRZADA HAVE MADE GAINS. A WELL-INFORMED LAHORE SOURCE REPORTS THAT A CHANGE IN THE DISTRICT COORDINATION COMMITTEE THERE REFLECTS A DELIBERATE DIMINUTION OF THE STRENGTH OF MUBASHIR HASSAN WITHIN THE PARTY. THE LEFTIST MUBASHIR CARRIES ON AS NATIONAL PPP GENERAL SECRETARY, HOWEVER.

4. ALTHOUGH, INEVITABLY, THE REORGANIZATION HAS BEEN GREETED WITH SOME GRUMBLING -- MORE IT APPEARS IN SIND THAN IN THE PUNJAB -- THERE SEEMS LITTLE DOUBT THAT JUST ABOUT EVERYONE IN THE PARTY IS PREPARED TO LIVE WITH IT. ASIDE FROM THE EXPANSION OF THE PPP HOUSE TO INCLUDE MANY MORE MANSIONS, THERE SEEM TWO BASIC AND INTERRELATED EXPLANATIONS FOR THE SMOOTHNESS WITH WHICH THE REORGANIZATION

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HAS SEEMINGLY BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. NOT ONLY DOES THE DOMINANT POSITION THE PPP NOW ENJOYS DISCOURAGE DISGRUNTLED ELEMENTS FROM SEEKING TO REPAIR THEIR POLITICAL FORTUNES OUTSIDE THE PARTY, THE PROSPECT OF FURTHER LOAVES AND FISHES TO COME ALSO OFFERS THEM THE HOPE OF LATER SATISFACTION. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE POL COUNSELOR AND THE LAHORE POL OFFICER WHO TRAVELLED IN THE PUNJAB AS THE REORGANIZATION WAS BEING ANNOUNCED WERE STRUCK WITH THE MUCH GREATER IMPORTANCE THE PARTY FAITHFUL ATTACHED TO THE FORTHCOMING DISTRIBUTION OF PPP NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY NOMINATIONS THAN THEY DID TO CHANGES WITHIN THE PARTY. FOR THEM, AND WE AGREE WITH THEIR ASSESSMENT, THE PARTY REORGANIZATION IS MERELY A SIDESHOW IN THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER AND INFLUENCE. THE MAIN EVENT WILL COME WSN TICKETS ARE GIVEN OUT, AND IT IS ONLY THEN THAT THE DISSATISFIED WILL SERIOUSLY CONSIDER WHAT ALTERNATIVES ARE OPEN TO THEM. WE SUSPECT THAT THE VAST PREPONDERANCE WILL DECIDE TO STAY PUT, AND NOT SEPARATE THEMSELVES FROM A PARTY WHICH ALL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS WILL RETAIN POWER BY INCREASED MARGINS IN THE BALLOTING.

5. EXPECTATIONS THAT THIS BALLOTING WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1977, ALREADY RIFE, WERE GIVEN A FURTHER FILLIP BY THE PM'S SPEECH LAST WEEK WINDING UP HIS TOUR OF MULTAN DIVISION. WHILE REPEATING HIS FAMILIAR -- AND, GIVEN THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR A YEAR'S POSTPONEMENT -- AMBIGUOUS ASSURANCE THAT THE ELECTION WOULD BE HELD ON SCHEDULE, BHUTTO WENT ON TO NOTE THAT ALTHOUGH INDIA AND BANGLADESH HAD POSTPONED ELECTIONS CITING LONG

ABNORMAL SITUATION IN THE REGION, ELECTIONS OF PAKISTAN

WOULD BE HELD ON TIME DESPITE SUCH ABNORMAL CONDITIONS. NAWA-I-WAQT PUBLISHER NIZAMI SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD MISSION OFFICERS THAT IT HAD BEEN WIDELY EXPECTED IN LAHORE THAT
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BHUTTO WOULD MAKE UP HIS MIND ABOUT ELECTIONS FOLLOWING HIS MULTAN TOUR, AND THAT THE PM NOW APPEARS TO HAVE DECIDED TO GO AHEAD. WITH THE PARLIAMENT NOW PUTTING FINISHING TOUCHES ON A NEW ELECTORAL LAW -- WHICH INTER ALIA PROVIDES FOR A CAMPAIGN PERIOD OF NO LESS THAN SIX WEEKS -- MOST BETTING HERE IS NOW ON A MARCH RACE.
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